

NSC BRIEFING

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- I. Spain may initiate at any time a major military offensive against irregular Moroccan Army of Liberation (AOL) in Spanish West African territories. France will probably lend some tangible support but precise extent of French participation unclear.
- A. The rebels succeeded during November-December in forcing Spanish withdrawal to the coast.
- II. Numerous reports of a pending "joint offensive" received since 9 January when [REDACTED] such an operation would be carried out in early February.
- A. Although French concerned about AOL incursions over the border and fearful consequences complete disappearance Spanish power from area, France's participation likely to be limited.
- III. Spain has been building up its military position in Canaries and West African mainland and now has 15,000 men as well as some 50 aircraft and naval forces in the area.
- IV. French strength in adjoining French territories is estimated at about 7,000 men.
- V. Rebels strength is approximately 7,000 armed guerrillas.
- A. Extreme mobility of guerrillas and their ability to lose identity among local tribesmen and to melt across Moroccan frontiers, makes ultimate success of any operation against them highly problematical.
- VI. Meanwhile, situation along Tunisian frontier continues grave.

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- A. French frustration is growing over Algerian rebel concentrations and bases French believe are located in Tunisia.
 - 1. French reports of size these concentrations believed exaggerated. Nevertheless sentiment is growing amongst French for early action to deny rebels their sanctuary in Tunisia.
- B. Gaillard not likely to sanction any major punitive offensive at this time but new incidents could force his hand, and create new crises which might induce Bourguiba to appeal to UN and to US.

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